Amritsar train disaster

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| **Amritsar train incident**   |  | | --- | | https://en.wikipedia.org/api/rest_v1/page/graph/png/Amritsar_train_disaster/0/284c97087ed38cfea24c62ff2e921f50a973f6bf.png  [[Full screen]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Amritsar_train_disaster#/maplink/0) | | |
| **Details** | |
| **Date** | 19 October 2018 |
| **Time** | ≈18:45 [IST](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Indian_Standard_Time) (UTC+05:30) |
| **Location** | [Amritsar, Punjab](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Amritsar,_Punjab) |
| **Coordinates** | https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/thumb/5/55/WMA_button2b.png/17px-WMA_button2b.png[31°37′51″N 74°53′50″E](https://tools.wmflabs.org/geohack/geohack.php?pagename=Amritsar_train_disaster&params=31_37_51_N_74_53_50_E_type:event_region:IN)[Coordinates](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Geographic_coordinate_system): https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/thumb/5/55/WMA_button2b.png/17px-WMA_button2b.png[31°37′51″N 74°53′50″E](https://tools.wmflabs.org/geohack/geohack.php?pagename=Amritsar_train_disaster&params=31_37_51_N_74_53_50_E_type:event_region:IN)[[1]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Amritsar_train_disaster#cite_note-1) |
| **Country** | India |
| **Operator** | [Indian Railways](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Indian_Railways): [Northern Railway](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Northern_Railway_zone) |
| **Cause** | Trespassing |
| **Statistics** | |
| **Deaths** | At least 59 |
| **Injuries** | At least 100 |

Two [Indian Railways](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Indian_Railways) passenger [trains](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Trains) crashed into a crowd of people in the eastern outskirts of [Amritsar](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Amritsar), [Punjab](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Punjab_(India)), on 19 October 2018. The crowd had gathered to watch celebrations for the [Hindu](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hinduism) festival of [Dussehra](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dussehra" \o "Dussehra) and were standing on the tracks. The accident occurred in the early evening, killing at least 59 people[[2]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Amritsar_train_disaster" \l "cite_note-2) and injuring approximately an additional 100.[[3]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Amritsar_train_disaster#cite_note-3)



Incident[[edit](https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Amritsar_train_disaster&action=edit&section=1" \o "Edit section: Incident)]

According to local police and news media, the spectators were standing and sitting on or near the tracks in the [Joda Phatak](https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Joda_Phatak&action=edit&redlink=1" \o "Joda Phatak (page does not exist))[[a]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Amritsar_train_disaster#cite_note-6) area in the outskirts of Amritsar. The spectators were watching the burning of an [effigy](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Effigy) of [Ravana](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ravana" \o "Ravana) as part of the Dussehra festival, when a commuter train ran into the crowd.[[6]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Amritsar_train_disaster#cite_note-:0-7) The train was described as a [diesel multiple unit](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jalandhar_City_-_Amritsar_DEMU) (DMU) local passenger train travelling westbound from [Jalandhar station](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jalandhar_City_Junction_railway_station) to [Amritsar](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Amritsar_Junction_railway_station). Witnesses claimed that another train, the [Amritsar–Howrah Mail](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Amritsar_Mail) service, had passed in the opposite direction moments earlier,[[7]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Amritsar_train_disaster" \l "cite_note-8) and this was later confirmed by the gateman in charge of the junction.[[8]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Amritsar_train_disaster#cite_note-9)

Several witnesses claimed that the train did not blow its horn when it got close to the crowds of spectators.[[9]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Amritsar_train_disaster#cite_note-10) The driver said that he both honked and applied the emergency brakes but did not come to a complete halt because the crowd had begun to pelt the train with stones.[[10]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Amritsar_train_disaster#cite_note-11)

Local [Congress](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Indian_National_Congress) politician [Navjot Kaur Sidhu](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Navjot_Kaur_Sidhu" \o "Navjot Kaur Sidhu), the wife of the [Member of the Legislative Assembly](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Member_of_the_Legislative_Assembly_(India)) for [Amritsar East](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Amritsar_East_(Vidhan_Sabha_Constituency)), was the guest of honour at the event. She said she had left the site shortly before the accident occurred but that she returned as soon as she heard about it.[[11]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Amritsar_train_disaster#cite_note-12) Sidhu also said that the celebration was held there every year and that the railway authorities were alerted in advance of the need to moderate their speed.[[12]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Amritsar_train_disaster#cite_note-13)

Victims[[edit](https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Amritsar_train_disaster&action=edit&section=2" \o "Edit section: Victims)]

An official told reporters that elected officials confirmed that at least 59 people were killed in the accident. By the evening of 19 October 50 bodies had been discovered and at least 50 people had been admitted to a nearby hospital while the other nine bodies were found the next day.[[13]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Amritsar_train_disaster#cite_note-:1-14) Due to the force of the train's impact, many victims were dismembered or mutilated beyond recognition, which delayed the [body identification](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Body_identification).[[14]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Amritsar_train_disaster#cite_note-:2-15)

A local official said that most of the victims were migrant workers and their families from the states of [Uttar Pradesh](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Uttar_Pradesh) and [Bihar](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bihar) who lived in the area.[[15]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Amritsar_train_disaster#cite_note-16) Punjab navjot Singh siddhu visited some of the survivors and family members of the dead at a local hospital, on 20 October. During his visit two women met with him who had reportedly lost their entire families, including children, husbands and even in-laws.[[16]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Amritsar_train_disaster#cite_note-17)

The majority of those identified were [cremated](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cremation) at the [Shitla Mata](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Shitala" \o "Shitala) Temple in Amritsar, while a few others were sent back to their hometowns.[[17]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Amritsar_train_disaster#cite_note-18)[[18]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Amritsar_train_disaster#cite_note-19) Allegations were reported to the local media, that after the accident some of the crowd stole valuables of the victims and survivors; family members also reported that only the bodies of their relatives were returned but not their effects.[[19]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Amritsar_train_disaster#cite_note-20)

Response[[edit](https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Amritsar_train_disaster&action=edit&section=3" \o "Edit section: Response)]

[Punjab](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Punjab) [Chief Minister](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chief_minister) [Amarinder Singh](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Amarinder_Singh" \o "Amarinder Singh) announced compensation of ₹5 lakh (US$7,200) for the family of each of those killed, and free treatment for the injured. There was no immediate decision about any compensation from the railways. The central government also announced a compensation of ₹2 lakh (US$2,900) for the family of each of the dead and ₹50,000 (US$720) for the injured.[[20]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Amritsar_train_disaster#cite_note-21) The state announced a day of mourning in honor of the victims, and Singh ordered an inquiry into how the accident had occurred.[[13]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Amritsar_train_disaster#cite_note-:1-14)

On 23 October, [Navjot Singh Sidhu](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Navjot_Singh_Sidhu" \o "Navjot Singh Sidhu), Minister for Local Government, Tourism and Cultural Affairs in the Punjab State Government[[21]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Amritsar_train_disaster#cite_note-22) and husband of [Navjot Kaur Sidhu](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Navjot_Kaur_Sidhu" \o "Navjot Kaur Sidhu), who was the guest of honour at the festival, announced that he and his wife would adopt all the children who lost parents in the accident, covering their education and all other expenses, and that women who lost their husbands would also be extended all required financial help.[[22]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Amritsar_train_disaster#cite_note-23)

Prime Minister [Narendra Modi](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Narendra_Modi" \o "Narendra Modi) and President [Ramnath Kovind](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ramnath_Kovind" \o "Ramnath Kovind)[[23]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Amritsar_train_disaster#cite_note-24) offered condolences to the families of the dead and hopes that the injured would recover quickly.[[6]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Amritsar_train_disaster#cite_note-:0-7) Video footage of the incident seemed to show several mobile phones filming after the accident, causing the former [Jammu and Kashmir](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jammu_and_Kashmir) Chief Minister [Omar Abdullah](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Omar_Abdullah) to criticise the reaction of the crowd.[[24]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Amritsar_train_disaster#cite_note-25)

**Protest**[[edit](https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Amritsar_train_disaster&action=edit&section=4" \o "Edit section: Protest)]

The day after the accident, 20 October, some locals staged a [sit-in protest](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sit-in) on the railway tracks, demanding action from officials, the train driver, and "adequate compensation" for the victims.[[14]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Amritsar_train_disaster#cite_note-:2-15) Some protesters demanded that the families of those killed receive government jobs, and placed blame on officials. Railway services were continued 40 hours after the incident.[[25]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Amritsar_train_disaster#cite_note-26)

Railway[[edit](https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Amritsar_train_disaster&action=edit&section=5" \o "Edit section: Railway)]

Railways Minister Piyush Goyal, on a visit to the United States at the time of the accident, announced his immediate return to India.[[26]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Amritsar_train_disaster#cite_note-27) The route between Jalandhar and Amritsar was suspended, and the day after the incident 37 trains were cancelled, 16 trains diverted, and 18 trains terminated early.[[27]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Amritsar_train_disaster#cite_note-28)

[Minister of State](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Minister_of_State) for Railways [Manoj Sinha](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Manoj_Sinha" \o "Manoj Sinha) stated that the railways administration had not been informed of the festival's location or timing.[[28]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Amritsar_train_disaster#cite_note-29) A senior Indian Railways official described the incident as "a clear case of trespassing" and, when asked why the train did not stop or slow as it approached, explained that there was "so much smoke that the driver was unable to see anything and he was also negotiating a curve."[[29]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Amritsar_train_disaster#cite_note-30)

**Loco Pilot**[[edit](https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Amritsar_train_disaster&action=edit&section=6)]

The loco pilot reported the accident immediately to the [Amritsar Junction](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Amritsar_Junction_railway_station) [station master](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Station_master)[[30]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Amritsar_train_disaster#cite_note-31) and was detained by the [Punjab Police](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Punjab_Police_(India)) and [Railway Police](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Railroad_police) at [Ludhiana Railway Station](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ludhiana_Junction_railway_station) for questioning.[[31]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Amritsar_train_disaster#cite_note-32) The loco pilot reportedly told officials that he had received a [green signal](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Railway_signal) and had no idea that there were hundreds of people standing on the tracks.[[32]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Amritsar_train_disaster#cite_note-33) Railways [Minister of State](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Minister_of_State) [Manoj Sinha](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Manoj_Sinha" \o "Manoj Sinha) denied any negligence on the loco pilot's part and stated that no action was being taken against him.[[33]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Amritsar_train_disaster#cite_note-34)

The loco pilot released a letter on 21 October which detailed his account of the crash. He said that he applied the [emergency brakes](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Emergency_brake_assist) and honked to disperse the crowd, but when a mob surrounded the train and threw stones at the train he continued to the next stop.[[](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Amritsar_train_disaster#cite_note-35)